

VZCZCXRO0548  
PP RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR  
DE RUEHSQ #0212/01 0801514  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 201514Z MAR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY SKOPJE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7188  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE 0254  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUESEN/SKOPJE BETA  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2232  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SKOPJE 000212

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SCE, USNATO FOR AMB NULAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [MK](#)

SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: PRESIDENT & PRIME MINISTER ON VIENNA  
TALKS ON THE NAME

REF: SKOPJE 201 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: P/E CHIEF SHUBLER, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

SUMMARY.

¶1. (C) In separate meetings with President Crvenkovski and PM Gruevski on March 17, the Ambassador said the US wants to help Macedonia and Greece reach a compromise on the name issue that will ensure Macedonia receives a NATO invitation at the NATO summit in Bucharest. Time is short, however, and the GOM needs to be more proactive in putting names on the table, preferably with a geographic modifier to meet Greek concerns.

¶2. (C) Both leaders said an agreement was possible, but that proposals such as those UN Envoy Nimetz had tabled at the March 17 Vienna talks on the name were non-starters. Both Gruevski and Crvenkovski suggested additional name options, including Republic of Makedonia (spelling variant) and European Republic of Macedonia. Crvenkovski suggested as a last resort a conditional invitation that would require resolution of the name dispute before ratification of Macedonia's membership. Both leaders said a Greek veto would not cause Macedonia to swerve from its reform course or continued work toward NATO and EU membership. We are less sanguine. End summary.

US WANTS TO HELP, TIME IS RUNNING OUT  
-----

¶3. (C) In a March 17 meeting, Ambassador Milovanovic told PM Gruevski that the United States wants a successful outcome to the name negotiations (reftel), but that there is very little time left. She noted the meeting of the negotiators with Amb. Nimetz later that day in Vienna and emphasized that the goal is to settle the issue, not just participate in the process. The US supported including Macedonia in the upcoming round of NATO enlargement, but the goal would not be achieved without a deal with the Greeks. She asked the Prime Minister whether he thought there were prospects for finding a solution in time and what were his plans.

AGREEMENT STILL WITHIN REACH  
-----

¶4. (C) Gruevski replied that agreement "probably" was possible. He described the March 13 trilateral (US--Macedonia--Greece) meeting in Brussels, in which FM

Bakoyannis sharply rejected "State of Macedonia" and "State of Constitutional Macedonia" as name options, while Gruevski had again rejected "Upper," "New," and "Vardar" as modifiers.

He said he was reluctant to put forward additional, more flexible names or positions for fear of being stuck with them when negotiations resume at some point in the future after a Greek veto. He did not accept that in any negotiation one can put forward a proposal or offer that is part of a package, and time-limited, and later withdrawn if agreement is not reached.

#### TWO NAME OPTIONS; NEED MORE CHOICES

-----

15. (C) Gruevski complained that Greece was not satisfied with simply getting Macedonia to change its name; it also wanted to choose the new name. The Ambassador said that was why the Macedonian side needed to supply a larger stock of potential names. Gruevski asked that the US side float two name ideas that might work for Macedonia: State of Macedonia (which FM Bakoyannis has rejected) and Republic of Makedonia (spelling variant). He made clear that he was only talking about replacing FYROM wherever it is currently used; he would not consider altering the name for bilateral use or for passports.

16. (C) The Ambassador told Gruevski he needed to come up with ideas more likely to be acceptable to Greece. He retorted that she had asked him to be forthcoming with possibilities, and those were the options he currently had in mind. She agreed we would forward the names.

#### POST-VETO: REFORMS WILL CONTINUE

SKOPJE 00000212 002 OF 003

-----

17. (C) In the event of a Greek veto, Gruevski said, his government would continue to pursue its reform course. He predicted several months of depression, frustration, and public and private actions that would not be favorably viewed in Greece. But reforms in Macedonia would continue with the same intensity, as would efforts to attract investments. The government would continue to work for NATO and EU membership.

18. (C) The Ambassador urged Gruevski to consider accepting instead the risk of a few months of potential unhappiness over a compromise on the name, followed by all the benefits of NATO membership and good relations with Greece, as well as the near-term boost to Macedonia's EU negotiation efforts. She said the U.S. would work to help explain this decision to political leaders and the public. Gruevski responded that if the name options presented were unacceptable it would not be possible to explain the outcome.

#### VIENNA MEETING: DIKTAT VS. COMPROMISE

-----

19. (C) In a meeting later that day, President Crvenkovski told the Ambassador that Amb Dimitrov had reported the meeting in Vienna had been &disappointingly bad.8 The newest Nimetz proposal &was worse than previous ones,8 and only included names with geographic modifiers and others Macedonia had rejected in the past ) New Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Upper Macedonia, or Republika Makedonija (Skopje) untransliterated. Was Nimetz trying to get Skopje to reject his proposals? The process looked more like a diktat than a compromise. Dimitrov told Crvenkovski that Nimetz told him &I am doing this deliberately to bring you closer to Greece.8

#### MAKE AN OFFER

-----

110. (C) The Ambassador said we had hoped progress in the

Monday meeting would have paved the way for a meeting in Brussels this week to agree on a name. The US wanted a negotiated settlement. But Macedonia had to submit proposals, not just react to them. The PM,s fear that a Macedonian proposal would be pocketed by Greece, only to have the goal post moved again, was misplaced ) any offer could be made conditional on reaching agreement. The US wanted to facilitate the process, but we needed more active engagement from the Macedonian side. The next 10 days would be critical, &make or break.8

TIME IS SHORT  
-----

¶11. (C) Crvenkovski agreed timing was critical. He said the PM and President would have to consult with the Parliament ) for legal reasons ) on any compromise solution reached. The latest date for doing so would be Friday, 3/28, assuming rapid parliamentary action to pass a resolution (by simple majority) agreeing to the solution. He said he had long favored making proposals and negotiating flexibly, but PM Gruevski was not ready to do so since it appeared Macedonia was being driven to accept the Greek position. Crvenkovski predicted the PM would become even more hardline in his stance as a result.

IF WE GET A GOOD PROPOSAL, ISSUE CAN BE RESOLVED  
-----

¶12. (C) Crvenkovski noted that he was disappointed that nothing proposed by Macedonia had been included by Nimetz in the Vienna talks, even as a throwaway. He said he had proposed various names during the last consultations with Nimetz (Autonomous Republic of Macedonia, State of Macedonia, Democratic Republic of Macedonia, Independent Republic of Macedonia, Sovereign Republic of Macedonia, Free Republic of Macedonia), and that the GOM could have worked with those in the Vienna talks. If Macedonia received a good proposal from Nimetz, there was room to resolve the issue.

¶13. (C) The Ambassador pointed out that the proposal had to  
SKOPJE 00000212 003 OF 003

be acceptable to Greece. Crvenkovski replied that Dimitrov had told Nimetz in Vienna that his proposals had put Skopje in an &impossible situation.8 Nimetz had countered that the names proposed were ones Greece might be able to swallow. (Comment: We believe at least two of the three names on the table were previously proposed or accepted by Greece. End comment). Nimetz said that if there was positive response to his proposal, he would call for another meeting in New York, possibly next week. Crvenkovski told the Ambassador he wanted to respond quickly to Nimetz to preserve time in the process.

TWO POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION  
-----

¶14. (C) Crvenkovski said he was thinking of two possible courses of action in the coming weeks. He had thought of writing a letter to the UNSYG, NATO SYG, and other top leaders explaining the Macedonian position in the name talks and sharing the names Macedonia had proposed to demonstrate Skopje,s willingness to be flexible. The Ambassador pointed out that that course of action would not help resolve the name issue before Bucharest. Crvenkovski then said he also was thinking of proposing "European Republic of Macedonia," which would show Macedonia,s European orientation. He said that had once been suggested by the late President Trajkovski, however, and he was not sure PM Gruevski would accept it.

CONDITIONAL NATO INVITATION?  
-----

¶15. (C) The Ambassador urged Crvenkovski to find a geographic

modifier that the Greeks had not yet put forward and propose it. The President asked whether, if a solution to the name dispute was not found before Bucharest, it would be possible to secure a conditional invitation in which both sides would agree to resolve the issue before Greek ratification. The Ambassador said the Greek side was very unlikely to accept that approach. Crvenkovski said that, in the event of a Greek veto, life would still go on in Macedonia. The government would continue to work to obtain a NATO invitation in the future, whether at the 2009 NATO summit or beyond. In the meantime, Macedonia could work on meeting EU benchmarks to receive a date for beginning accession negotiations.

COMMENT

-----

¶16. (C) We are less sanguine than either the President or the PM about prospects for sustained public or government energetic practical efforts toward Euro-Atlantic integration in the near-term and possibly longer-term aftermath of a Greek veto. Gruevski is certain to call early elections with or without a NATO invitation, and the next GOM is likely to ride to power on a wave of anti-Greek resentment if Athens vetoes. Disillusionment with NATO in that event could also be strong. That would rob the government of incentives for continuing energetically with reforms, which will add to ethnic Albanian frustration -- and heightened inter-ethnic tensions -- over being left out of the NATO club because of the ethnic Macedonian fixation on the name and national identity.

MILOVANOVIC